

Lead found in varnish of longtime front doors

Vic Hall entrance boarded up as door decontamination work starts

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Restoration work to replace the foundations of the main outdoor staircase of Victoria Hall has led to an additional charge of \$48,163 for a new grand total of some \$513,457. The initial work was approved by city council March 17 for \$465,294.

As passers-by and users of Victoria Hall by the east-side door may have noticed recently, the four signature glass-paned double doors have been removed and replaced by makeshift ones.



The front entrance to Victoria Hall was boarded up by the time of this photo on June 12.

ified in the varnish on the [original] doors,” and that they will be “replaced by [a] temporary wood closure.”

Water infiltration

The work on Victoria Hall was originally approved March 17 and described by Councillor Shawn Moss as essentially repairing the structure underneath, which was allowing water infiltration.

It also involved “repairing the vestibule floor finishes, refinishing the vestibule doors and bringing

the handrail up to code.”

It was apparently unknown at that time that the door varnish was lead contaminated.

‘Drag queen bingo’ strikes light note at Victoria Hall



Drag queen Misty Waterfalls presided over a “drag queen bingo” put on by the city’s Community Events division at Victoria Hall on June 13. See p. 4 for story.

PHOTO: JENNIFER BALL

No issue next week
Next issue: July 7

This change follows a council resolution June 2 approved with the only comment being in the resolution itself. It explained that “the presence of lead has been identified

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See p. 5

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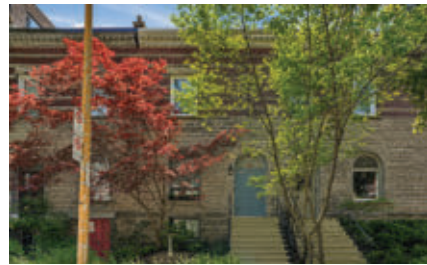
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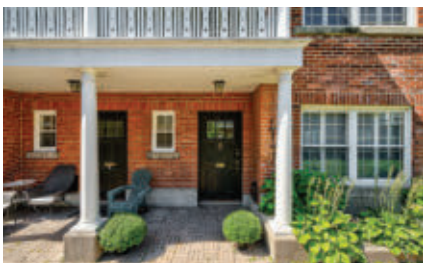
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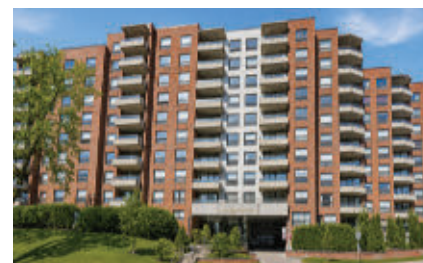
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Public Security finds disoriented teenager

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

While patrolling June 11 on St. Catherine St. near Metcalfe, officers came across a young woman “in apparent distress,” Public Security officials said. She was wearing a uniform from a local school at 8:46 am and stated she didn’t know what had happened, but had not eaten much.

A teacher, when contacted, confirmed that the student had “a medical condition.” Urgences Santé and the fire department’s first responders also arrived and took over. The girl’s mother came to the scene and the matter was left in their hands. She was described as a “teenager.”

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Police Report, p. 9

Social Notes:

Prupas, Palik at Temple, p. 14

Dodge on May real estate, p. 19

Pet page, p. 20

Social Notes:

Sainte-Marcelline, p. 21

Cycling training, at a hockey rink



On June 18, a very rainy day, Westmount’s Public Security bike patrollers received training at the Westmount recreation centre (WRC) from a retired police officer. From left are PSOs Jordan Ciampini, Troy Graggs and Will Harris. Although able to respond to any type of call throughout the city, the bike patrollers will concentrate on commercial zones, the bike path and parks, officials said.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC SECURITY.

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In run-up to Fierté Montréal 2026, Misty Waterfalls hosts 'drag queen bingo'

BY JENNIFER BALL

Montreal's gay pride events start on July 31 and end on August 9, but on June 13 Westmount got an early glimpse into the camp frivolities of the season, when drag queen Misty Waters presided over "drag queen bingo" – an event that the city's Community Events division produced.

Misty Waterfalls charmed the crowd at the sold-out event with pride music, over-the-top dancing and the requisite catty remarks. She informed the crowd that drag queen bingo – even though someone calls out numbers and participants have a bingo card – is not *at all* like regular bingo.

"You're in for a surprise, because [it is not] number after number after number when you're just playing to win. We're going to play only about two games and I'm just going to talk for two hours.

"So, if you're stressed and about to get



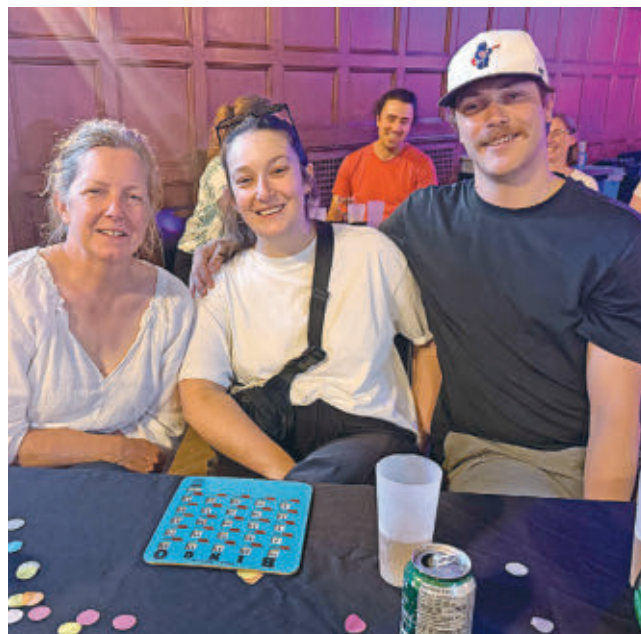
From left, bingo players Arlene Lapointe, Karen Griffin, Maureen Harity and Lynn Caplan.

that [winning] number, and you're like: 'Come on, bitch, keep going!'

"I won't!

"It's the name of the game. It's a whole different obstacle."

See also photo on p. 1.



Bingo players Patricia Pare, Lindsay Pearson and Carter Gough.



Bingo players Omar Sidiqua, Jamie Fletcher, Maria Tomovic and Sarah St-Arnaud.



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Westmount deals with illegal dumping with fines of \$100 to \$2,000

BY JENNIFER BALL

The *Independent* recently encountered a city sign on the ground by the out-of-service Holton staircase that read “Stop illegal dumping.”

The sign reads that a fine can be imposed between \$100 and \$2,000 and that “it is strictly prohibited for anyone to dispose of private waste, such as garbage, recycling, compost, green residues and construction debris, in public bins, parks, streets, alleys and spaces.”

The *Independent* reached out to the Communications department at the city on June 2 to ask if illegal dumping of garbage in public garbage bins is an issue in West-

mount. On June 3, Stacy Maignan, division head, said, “Yes, sometimes people put their household garbage and household recyclables in public garbage bins.”

The *Independent* wondered if the city had seen an increase in illegal dumping when the frequency of garbage collection was decreased from weekly to biweekly from October 2024 to April 2025. (It is currently every week.)

Maignan said, “We did notice an increase in illegal dumping following the introduction of biweekly garbage collection. However, over time, the situation improved and the number of incidents has generally returned to a lower level.”

Maignan said that there are no particu-



lar hotspots for illegal dumping in Westmount and, like in any municipality, various locations throughout Westmount can occasionally be affected.

“Illegal dumping is an issue that affects the entire community,” she concluded. “In addition to creating visual nuisances, it can attract pests, generate additional clean-up and operational costs, and, depending on the materials involved, have negative impacts on the environment. The city encourages residents to contact Public Works if they have questions about waste disposal or waste management services rather than disposing of materials inappropriately.”

◀“Stop Illegal Dumping” sign found on the ground June 2 by the out-of-use Holton Ave. staircase.

Cllr. Aronson favours less mowing/explains some must be done in May

Large swathes of Murray Park’s lawn snipped during city’s No Mow May

BY JENNIFER BALL

A Grosvenor Ave. questioner asked the mayor and council at the June 2 council meeting why the grass in King George (Murray) Park has been cut twice during No Mow May and if they were actually promoting the pause on cutting grass to help pollinators.

As the *Independent* reported in the May 12 issue (p. 4), Councillor Matt Aronson, whose commissionership includes parks

and green spaces, asked residents at the May 5 council meeting, “to let the grass grow this month.”

City’s goal

He explained that the idea is to allow the grass to grow, along with dandelions, clover and other so-called weeds, and that the approach aims to allow for the proliferation of butterflies and other pollinators. “Hold off on mowing to ensure pollinators

survive,” he said.

Responding to the questioner, Councillor Aronson said, “Were I the person that could draw the designated areas for No Mow May, it would have included a much bigger section of the park.”

He said there was a section of Murray Park that was designated as the area that would be left for the pollinators, which ran up the westerly side of the park. “They needed to find a spot where nobody would

trip [but] I hope next May, we’re going to see a much wider, expanded area that can be left to grow for the pollinators. [We] do need to take into consideration that maintaining the parks is a huge job – and there will be areas that have to be done in May in order for the park to be usable for the public...

“Could more of it be left to grow? Yes, I think so. But this is a program that does require a little bit of adjustment.”

Westmount Park ducks did not re-locate as expected City temporarily re-filling lagoon

BY JENNIFER BALL

The city is temporarily re-filling the Westmount Park pond to help support the duck eggs and ducklings currently on site.

Mugisha Rutishisha, director of Communications at the city, provided the *Independent* with a press release on June 16 as follow-up to the *Independent*’s June 16 story (p. 1) that informed readers that the Westmount Park lagoon won’t be re-filled, but “monitored” as the city adjusts watering practices to support an island-wide water conservation effort triggered by urgent water-main work on Atwater.

The press release reads: “The city of Westmount is aware of concerns regarding the ducklings at the Westmount Park pond and shares the community’s interest in protecting local wildlife. The decision to suspend the continuous filling of the pond was made as part of a regional effort led by Ville de Montréal to significantly reduce potable water consumption ... As one of the municipalities affected by these measures, Westmount is expected to contribute to the con-

servation effort...

“Before implementing this measure, the city consulted a wildlife conservation organization specializing in wild birds’ conservation. Based on the information provided, it was expected that adult ducks would relocate to other nearby bodies of water as water levels declined and that the ducklings would have sufficient time to mature before the pond became critically low.”

The statement explains that the situation with the ducks and ducklings evolved differently than anticipated, and as a result, the city is temporarily re-filling the Westmount Park pond.

“This is a short-term, precautionary measure while the situation is re-assessed. It must, however, be understood that this measure remains subject to the broader directives issued by the city of Montréal, which require a significant reduction in potable water use across the island. The suspension of re-filling for municipal bodies of water is part of these measures, and Westmount must remain aligned with this regional effort.”

City agrees to \$6.5M compensation from Quebec for expropriated land

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A special city council meeting called for June 16 turned out to have an agenda of some 16 items, of which nine turned out to involve the tabling of minor corrections to resolutions adopted at the two previous meetings.

One, however, resolved a longstanding issue in which the city agreed to accept payment of some \$6.5 million from Quebec’s ministry of Transport (now called Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility or “MTMD,” from the acronym in French).

This results from more than 10 years of legal negotiations over a portion of city land that the city used for storing Hydro Westmount equipment but had been expropriated for building the “new” 136 highway at the foot of Westmount (see story March 5, 2019, p. 1 and 7).

The previous layout dated back to the 1960s when the Ville Marie Expressway was built.

According to the recent resolution, the agreement was negotiated by lawyers for

the city and the head of Engineering “and was accepted by the ministry.”

The balance of \$6,499,035 remains to be paid by the MTMD.

Indie’s summer schedule

No issue: June 30
(Dominion Day observance)

Issue: July 7

Usual summer break:
July 14, 21 & 28
and August 4

Back to weekliness:
August 11 until Christmas

MAYOR STERN, COUNCIL CHAMPION DEMOCRATIC WAY ON CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

I am writing to follow up on my previous letter regarding the disproportionate hurdles my husband and I faced while trying to replace the rear windows of our home (“Heritage protection without proportionality is obstruction,” March 24, p. 6). I am pleased to share that at a recent meeting, the Westmount city council exercised its authority, looked at the actual context of our property and voted to approve our permit (June 2, p. 7) – rightfully going against the recommendation of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC).

This brings me directly to the recent article detailing how some residents are decrying a shift toward a more “discretionary” framework in draft By-law 1662 (May 4, p. 1), claiming that council should not contest the opinions of its appointed experts. I fundamentally disagree with that narrative.

An advisory committee is exactly that: *advisory*. Its members are appointed to provide a specialized technical lens, but they do not answer to the voters of Westmount. Our elected councillors do.

If a city council were legally or morally obligated to rubber-stamp every expert recommendation, we would no longer be living in a democracy governed by accountability; we would be living in a technocracy governed by a rigid, unchecked bureaucracy.

Our window application is a textbook example of why council override is a necessary democratic safety valve. The PAC rigidly demanded a costly, historic 1912 replication for a rear facade that had already been altered decades ago with uninspired 1970s aluminum. They mistook dogmatic adherence to guidelines for stewardship.

As Councillor Chomski noted in the article (May 4, p. 23), urban planning files involve “professional judgment rather than a single correct answer.” When an advisory body loses the forest for the trees, it is the explicit duty of our elected officials to step in and apply broader context, proportionality and common sense.

I applaud Mayor Stern and the city

council for doing exactly that. By stepping in, they proved that Westmount is a living, breathing community of residents, not a stagnant museum. We should welcome a discretionary framework that allows our elected leaders to lead.

MARY CALABRESE, SHERBROOKE ST.

LET’S TALK DETAILS, GET RATIONALE FOR PUBLIC SECURITY BODYCAMs NOW

So now Westmount wants bodycams for “public security.”

For what, exactly?

These aren’t police officers. They can’t arrest anyone. They can’t detain people. In most cases, they can’t even force you to show ID. So what problem is this solving, other than recording residents going about their day?

It feels like city hall has suddenly become very focused on “public order,” and now we’re jumping straight to camera surveillance.

And why is this coming out of nowhere, with no public discussion, no clear rules, no explanation about who gets access to the footage or how long it’s kept?

And what is this going to cost? Cameras, training, software, storage, maintenance ... it adds up fast. Are we going to get a clear number, or just another expensive program sold as “safety”?

We’ve seen this pattern before: Council rushes into something because it sounds modern or tough, and only later do we find out the details were never thought through.

Is this council really going to repeat the same mistakes as the last one, acting first and thinking later?

P. KNOWLES, SHERBROOKE ST.

MOVING FORWARD WITH ARTIFICIAL TURF FOR OUR YOUNG ATHLETES

The recent letters (June 16, p. 4) regarding the soccer field debate (“No to artificial turf plan” and “Artificial turf ‘2.0’ has major issues too”) raise familiar arguments, but they miss the practical reality of modern youth sports and the needs of our community’s children.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

While there is no perfect, flawless solution to this multi-decade debate, we need to look at what is actually best for the next generation. As a parent whose two boys played competitive lacrosse, attended boarding school in the US and went on to play NCAA Division 1 athletics, I have seen firsthand what modern sports infrastructure looks like. In every city, town and school they visited across North America, artificial turf was the standard.

My children constantly complained that Westmount’s playing surfaces simply do not measure up – not just compared to prep schools or major US centres, but even when compared to smaller, less affluent municipalities right here in Canada.

We are fond of labelling Westmount an active community of sports families, yet we are forcing our kids to play on subpar, inconsistent and potentially unsafe surfaces because of an ideological attachment to natural grass. A “well-maintained, intensively managed” grass field sounds wonderful in theory, but the reality of our climate and heavy community use means grass fields spent half the season turned into mud or closed for recovery.

If we want our kids to stay active, get off their screens, step away from social media and enjoy playing on a decent, reliable surface, we need to move forward. Let’s work with the city to find the best, most modern version of this technology – focusing on organic infills and smart management – rather than choosing stagnation disguised as environmentalism.

Our kids deserve facilities that match the standards of the rest of the continent.

VINCENT BRIE, SHERBROOKE ST.

WESTMOUNT NEEDS ARTIFICIAL TURF – AND RENEWED GRASS FIELDS

Westmount’s grass athletic fields are no longer keeping up with the level of use being placed on them. Anyone who has played, coached, refereed or watched children play on these fields can see the problem: the grass is worn down, uneven, full of dangerous patches and in some areas genuinely unsafe.

This is not simply a question of convenience or aesthetics. It is now a safety issue, a sports-access issue and potentially a liability issue for the city.

Westmount’s fields are being used beyond what natural grass can reasonably tolerate. Based on the level of demand from soccer, school programs, youth sports and community use, the fields appear to be operating far beyond sustainable capacity. Grass needs rest, drainage, sunlight, repair and time. Our fields do not get enough of any of those. The result is predictable:

the surfaces deteriorate, holes develop, the ground becomes uneven and the risk of injury rises.

This year, players have already been injured, including a recent broken foot. Other players have been hurt on the same uneven surfaces. At least one intercity team refused to play on a Westmount natural field because of the condition of the pitch, including potholes and unsafe areas. That should be a wake-up call. When visiting teams are refusing to play because the field is unsafe, the issue has moved beyond ordinary maintenance.

The problem is not only safety. It is also capacity and competitiveness.

Today, Westmount teams cannot train as often as teams in other boroughs and neighbouring municipalities. Because of field limitations and hour restrictions, our players may effectively receive half the practice time available elsewhere. That matters. Children in Westmount should not be at a structural disadvantage simply because the city has not modernized its athletic infrastructure. Proper artificial turf fields would immediately expand usable hours, reduce weather-related closures, and allow Westmount teams to train and compete on a more equal footing.

Westmount should not be choosing between artificial turf and grass. The city needs both: proper artificial turf fields where athletic use already exists, and a serious renewal program for the remaining grass fields.

The two locations that appear to make the most sense are the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG) and Marianopolis. Together, those two fields would give the city the capacity required for present demand and future growth. This is not about overbuilding. It is about placing durable athletic surfaces where they logically belong.

Artificial turf fields at the Westmount Athletic Grounds and Marianopolis would not “destroy green space.” These are athletic locations, not natural meadows being converted away from public use.

This should no longer be treated as a radical or controversial idea. Across Montreal and the surrounding municipalities, communities have already recognized the value of artificial turf for youth sports and public athletic access. Westmount is late to the discussion.

There are legitimate questions about artificial turf: heat, drainage, materials, environmental management, lighting, access and cost. Those issues should be studied carefully and addressed transparently. But they are not reasons to do nothing. They are reasons to choose the right turf systems, the right locations, the right designs, and the right operating rules.

The current situation is not neutral. Doing nothing also has consequences: more injuries, more cancelled practices, less

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Noise, dust undoubtedly unhealthy – Let's not return to gasoline leaf-blowers



T's Takes

RALPH THOMPSON

A few weeks ago, I was taking an early-morning, wistful, meandering walk up our small mountain with our dog Ciara. A gentle breeze, bright blue sky. The spring-time calls of northern cardinal, *chew, chew, chew*; the trills of song sparrow; the familiar whistle, *feebee feebee* of black-capped chickadee; and the quiet low whistling chant of the ruby-crowned kinglet after its recent 2,000-km journey from the southern USA.

I had my camera on hand for any unusual bird sightings. A pungent odour of chicken manure hung in the air. Ah, spring in Westmount. I looked at my watch with dread.

Almost 7 am.

Right on cue, the roar of a two-stroke lawnmower motor filled the air, and the revving of another engine joined in full dissonance: the jarring, piercing, snarling sound of a weed trimmer – and then the roar of a compressor, shaded by the deafening thuds of a jackhammer.

My watch registered 80 dB and I was a good distance from the machinery. The sounds of nature quickly evaporated.

Coincidentally, I later met one of our councillors walking down

Edgehill Rd. We had a chat, a few pleasant-tries, and the subject of gasoline-powered leaf-blowers arose.

I was astounded to learn that council was sympathizing with contractors and re-opening the discussion on the merits of gasoline-powered leaf blowers. Like the merits of a sledgehammer to crack a nut. The noise is problematic and potentially injurious, but the incredible dust and fine-particle pollution generated by these machines is a serious health issue.

I can only assume that the current council members are too busy working all day within the three-feet-thick stone walls and the air conditioning of city hall to hear the

proach to noise. It is the municipalities' responsibility. Montreal passes the buck to the boroughs. There are no universal standards. But healthcare is a provincial responsibility, funded by almost four billion federal dollars.

There's been a long established, indisputable fact in Westmount that noise and air pollution levels in our city are dangerously high. We debated gasoline-powered leaf blowers for 10 years. The issue is not how fast a contractor can clean up dead leaves. The issue is the health of our citizens and the liveability of our shared space. Since when did the need for removing dead leaves, *which by the way provide*

belts, without weighting, in each of the octave bands, and is obtained by using the following formula $L_{mi} = 10 \log_{10} N 10 L_{Ni} 10$."

As I said, *it is detailed*. But you don't need a maths degree or to read all 24 pages of law, the opening general statement is sufficient: "The act of making, causing, producing or permitting an excessive noise, as hereinabove defined, which disturbs the quiet, peace, rest, enjoyment or comfort of any person, without the consent of acquiescence of such person, is hereby declared to be a nuisance and an infringement of this by-law."

And to add a little specificity: "No person shall create, or cause to be created, a *disturbing noise* that will result in a corrected *global noise* level, as described in Section 17, that exceeds the following permissible *noise* levels by at least 2 decibels," including

- Anywhere in a yard or land used for recreation purposes maximum 55dBA,
- Balcony/patio/terrace maximum 50dBA.

These levels are already exceeded in many places. See my detailed T's Takes from September 17, 2024 ("Save our Ears," p. 19) that includes actual measurements such as:

- 76 dB from a hedge trimmer from 20 feet away,
- 82 dB from a temporary large air compressor at Roslyn School from 20 feet away,
- 90 dB from a leaf blower near Summit Woods (measured by a professional sound engineer

who happened to be making recordings while I was there).

The current by-laws are abused everywhere – without reverting to gasoline-powered equipment.

Public Safety has a challenging task. The city has by-laws that prevent fine particle emissions from solid-fuel-burning appliances (By-law 1634, Section 60). Why don't those same requirements apply to the dust created by leaf blowers? Our lungs and respiratory systems don't distinguish the source. From weed whackers to air-conditioning units, from clacking hand drills, construction equipment to heavy trucks and demolition, noise and dust pollution are on the rise and damaging to our health. Let's not add to the ruin of our environment.

Let's apply the intent of existing by-laws.

Allow me a maximum of 50 dB on my balcony so I can listen to the morning chorus of birds, the buzz of the bees and to breathe in clean, fresh air.



Sherbrooke St. near Metcalfe Ave. on April 6, 2022. Not healthy for the lungs or ears!

bedlam, or breathe in the dust and fine-particle pollution around our streets.

Federal reports tell an important story

Urban life has deteriorated to the point where there are now only two seasons each year: winter and "noise-pollution." As demonstrated in a 2022 Health Canada noise survey, environmental noise exposure is a growing concern in Canada.

Health Canada published a report in 2021, "Health Impacts of Air Pollution in Canada," which concluded that "Comprehensive risk assessments performed by Health Canada (2013, 2016) have concluded that [...] exposures to PM_{2.5} [fine particles with a diameter of 2.5 µm or less] [...] have been found to *exert the largest population health impacts in Canada*" (emphasis added).

Was this report discussed by council?

The province takes a hands-off ap-

excellent natural compost for trees and bushes, trump the health of our citizens, children and animals? Is someone proclaiming this equipment does not present a health hazard? I'd like to see the evidence.

If 65 dBs was too high from highway, isn't 90 dB from motors?

The city spent years and \$100,000 defending the rights of citizens to noise levels below 65 dB's close to Route 136. The action crumbled but not because 65dB was too low a noise level. Everyone agreed that was an acceptable upper limit. Nevertheless, we now want to add another 90+ dB leaf blowers to the mix, not to mention weed trimmers and lawnmower mowers.

Hail the powers that be for their unfathomable logic.

Westmount's existing By-law 1387 is detailed, precise and unambiguous. "The average level of energy, expressed in deci-

Letters to the editor, cont'd from p. 6

development time for young athletes, more unusable grass, more pressure on already damaged fields and more frustration.

Westmount should not let this debate be driven by a small number of voices who do not depend on these fields and may never use them. The city must also listen to the children, families, coaches, schools, clubs and residents who do rely on this infrastructure every week.

This is about safe fields, responsible municipal planning and fair access to sports.

Westmount can protect green space, support youth sports, reduce injuries, improve competitiveness and modernize public infrastructure at the same time. But it requires the city to stop patching a broken system and finally address the field-capacity problem directly.

NATHANIEL KREMER, CÔTE ST. ANTOINE RD.

Safdie explores sports/family parallels in *Beyond Ken Dryden*

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Oren Safdie was born, raised and educated in Westmount, although Los Angeles has been his home base in recent years. But he is back until next January.

Living over the summer at his mother's place, Safdie was recently rehearsing a group of students who flew into Montreal from the Interlochen Centre for the Arts in Michigan, where he teaches. He will be directing them in his coming-of-age play, *Gratitude*, at the Toronto Fringe Festival in July.

He also recently published a memoir in which professional hockey and family drama overlap. A quick read at 90 pages, *Beyond Ken Dryden* is one of a series of books issued by Linda Leith Publishing under the company's "Singles" series of titles.

While Safdie has made a name for himself as a playwright and screenwriter (the *New York Times* has covered him), *Beyond Ken Dryden* is his first foray into straight prose.

Taking place from the late 1960s up to the late 1970s, the narrative follows the progress of the Montreal Canadiens when the team was an NHL powerhouse and Ken Dryden was in nets.

But at the same time, Safdie's family life

was falling apart.

Life imitates sports

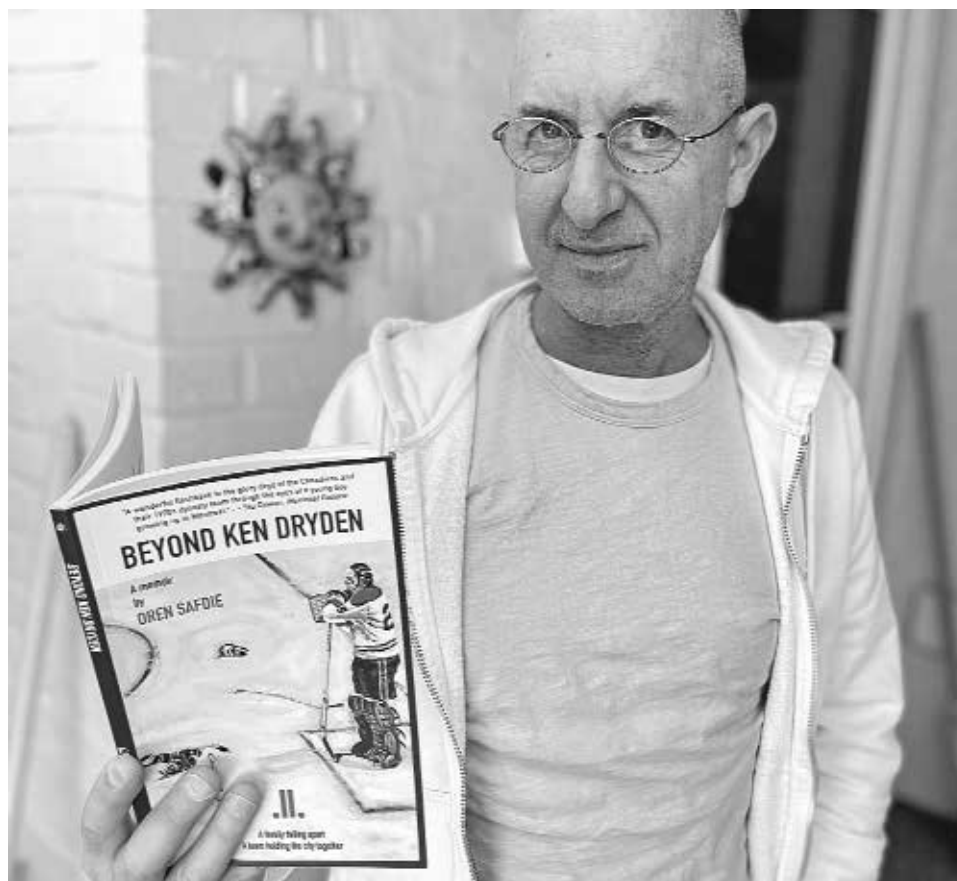
Oren sees the Habs' larger-than-life loss of Ken Dryden as a parallel to his family's troubles. "When my father left for good to move to Boston, that's when Ken Dryden left," said Safdie.

The book contains some direct references to Westmount, including a December 1970 fire that destroyed the Safdie home at 9 Bellevue Ave. just above Aberdeen and The Boulevard, after which they lived for a time at the Hotel Bonaventure downtown and then at Habitat.

"The '70s was such a great time to grow up in Westmount," he said in an interview with the *Independent*. "While all our parents were off having their marital problems, we young kids were kind of roaming Westmount with no supervision.

"It's not like you could do that in any city when you're 10 or 11 years old - going from house to house like a pack of wolves," he added. "We were sort of on our own and became very independent very early."

Oren Safdie is the nephew of Westmounter Gabriel Safdie, who also just published a book (see "Gabriel Safdie's Affair with China combines photojournalism with insights," May 19, 2026, p. 10).



Playwright/screenwriter Oren Safdie on June 3 at his mother's house in Westmount.

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No house has been re-built on the lot of 9 Bellevue Ave., as seen June 21, after a fire there in 1970. "The only thing that remains is the same garage door," said Oren Safdie, "but the property is wild."

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Police Report**St. Antoine St. car owner victim of licence plate switching**

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The owner of a vehicle that was parked on St. Antoine St. recently may have been the victim of a tactic used by car thieves to evade detection by the police.

According to Montreal police Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit, the licence plate on the vehicle was removed and replaced with the plate from another car that had presumably been stolen.

What often happens in situations like this is that any traffic offences involving a stolen vehicle get sent to the owner of the stolen licence plate, although this was not necessarily the case in this particular instance, according to the information released by Cst. Yigit.

However, there is far less chance of a stolen vehicle being identified quickly by police while it has the wrong plate.

In this instance, the stolen licence plate's owner filed a complaint with police at the Stanton St. station on June 11 after noticing that the plate on his car had an unfamiliar letter-and-number sequence. According to Cst. Yigit, switching licence plates is occa-

sionally used by experienced car thieves.

"Sometimes, when they have a similar vehicle, they will switch licence plates with that vehicle in question," he said.

Electric bike stolen

The bike-theft season continued last week with a report filed at Station 12 of another high-end two-wheeler being stolen in spite of its owner's precautionary efforts.

According to Cst. Yigit, the perpetrator managed to cut a rigid steel U-lock securing an electric bike worth \$2,000 that was parked on June 16 in a laneway behind Strathcona Ave.

Yigit had little in the way of advice to offer bike owners hoping to protect their investment from being stolen. He said the tools being used now by bike thieves are more compact and easy to carry around inconspicuously.

"They walk around now with a portable grinder in their pockets," he said.

Still, he insisted that the better the lock, the greater the chance a bike won't be stolen. "If you have an expensive bike, get an expensive lock," said Yigit.



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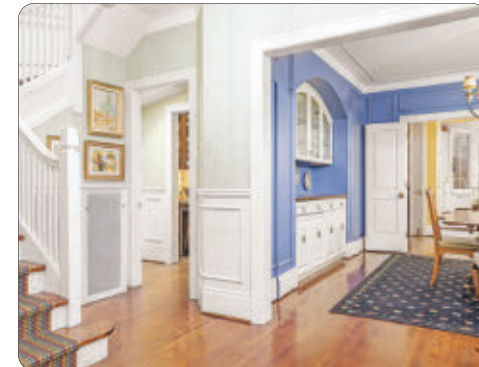
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Retailers moved inside to avoid Sunday's rain

Vic village sidewalk sale doubles participants on sunny Saturday

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The Victoria village spring festival took place mainly on a hot and sunny Saturday, June 13, featuring sidewalk sales along both sides of Sherbrooke and on Victoria, as well as musical entertainment in Prince Albert square as merchants savoured the opportunity to move merchandise outside.

"We have double the number of participants this year," said Leam Venafro, president of the Victoria village merchants' association while meeting shoppers outside the Audio Centre.

The next day, a rainy Sunday, however, the weather was not so accommodating. Performances scheduled in Prince Albert square had to be cancelled. This decision was owing in large measure to the electrical equipment involved.

Most merchants without a canopy over their merchandise moved their sales items indoors.

Last year's re-construction road work on the north side of Sherbrooke through the shopping area caused limited participation. This year, however, the continued work on Sherbrooke east of Grosvenor was not in the shopping area.



Face painting in Prince Albert square on June 13.



Cookies offered from Scrumptiches cookie shop on Sherbrooke on June 13.



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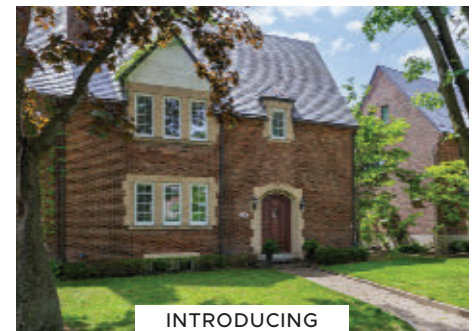
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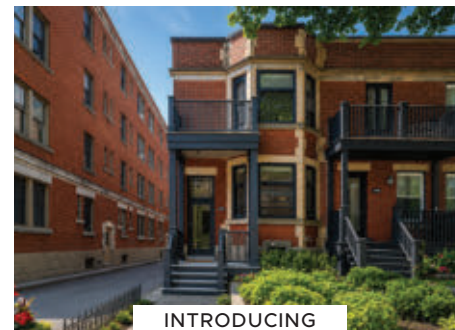
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‘Generation to Generation’ at Temple honours Prupas, Palik



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Forecast thunderstorms did not deter the elegantly attired guests arriving for Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom’s gala. “From Generation to Generation 2026” honoured **Michael Prupas** and **Betty Palik** and their family. Three generations are presently active at Temple: **Jesse Prupas** is on the board and his daughter **Aria Prupas** teaches at Temple School.

On behalf of Temple, senior rabbi **Lisa Grushcow** presented the Prupas family a beautiful engraved silver picture frame *L’ Dor va Dor* (which means “From Generation to Generation”).

Tribute committee members were the honorable **Pierre Marc Johnson**, **Irene Litinsky**, **Michael Goldbloom**, **Calin Rovinescu** and **Howard Stotland**. Gala committee members were **Leslie Alcorn**, **Felicity Blatt**, **Penny Echenberg**, **Erit Gilman**, **Nancy Cummings Gold**, **Denise Grossman**, **Marcy Kastner**, **Jewel Lowenstein**, **Sandy Martz**, **Betsy Pomerantz**, **Risa Sherzer**, **Nancy Strohl** and **Glenna Uline**, whose organizational skills helped drive the success of the sold-out eve.

MCs were Temple’s honorary trustee **Neil** *continued on p. 16*



Sitting: Yana Eventov, Jesse Prupas, Laura Butler, Talia Prupas, Aria Prupas, Avi Prupas, Alana Geller and Betty Palik; and standing: Michael Prupas, Jonas Prupas, Leo Prupas, Penelope Prupas, Ruby Prupas, Solomon Prupas, Eli Prupas and Aren Prupas.



Sandy Martz, Betsy Pomerantz, Betty Palik, Marcy Kastner, Michael Prupas, Glenna Uline, Jewel Lowenstein and Nancy Strohl.



Caroline Miller, Lorne Mill, Marcy Kastner, Rabbi Ben Luks, Morgan and Sasha Luks-Morgan.

Thank You & Happy Summer

Thank you for the trust you place in me as your provincial elected representative. It's a privilege to serve the citizens of our riding!

I hope your summer is filled with warm weather, and memorable moments.

My team and I remain available during the season should you need assistance.



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Social notes, cont'd from p. 14

Wiener, partner Fasken Martineau DuMoulin, and first vice president Sam Berliner, general counsel Cineplex.

They introduced cantorial soloists Rona Nadler and Alexandra Asher, who sang the national anthems of Canada and Israel. Later in the evening, they performed a medley of duets from films, appropriate as the Prupas family business, MUSE, is a Canadian film and television production company.

Corporate sponsors were Betty Palik and Michael Prupas, MUSE Entertainment, Dazmo, Difuze inc., Langlois Lawyers, Premium Sound, Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton and Richter.

Temple board members present included Melissa Shriqui (president), Jewel Lowenstein (with Paul Lowenstein), Sam Berliner (Betsy Pomerantz), Neil Wiener (Sylvie Plante), Caroline Miller, Nancy Maklan (Martin Smith), Monika Simon, Susan Greenberg, Doug Simsovic (Cindy Bélanger), David Moll (Stephanie Moll), Stephen Yaffe (France Ellyson), Rhoda Reisman and Chuck Hendrickson (Cheryl Libman).

Noted in the chicly-dressed crowd were Julia Reitman, Eric

Maldoff and Andrea Wolff, Howard Stotland, Gloria and Neil Mintz, Dulcie Naimer and Henry Mintzberg, Monica and David Berger, Nancy Cummings Gold and Senator Marc Gold, Hélène de Kovachich, Louise Dery Goldberg and Joel Goldberg, Rosalie Jukier and Lewis Dobrin, Nancy Strohl, Gloria and Neil Mintz, Nan and Bill Lassner, Martha and Mark Oppenheim,

Denise Grossman and Stephen Klempner, Leslie Alcorn, Gail Isseman, Sandy and David Martz, Nancy and Jack Ditkofsky, Jane Adams, Mona Golfman and Richard Abrahamson, Arlene Greenberg, Penny Echenberg and Alice and Jonathan Goldbloom.

In addition to Rabbi Grushcow and Shelley Grushcow, Temple executive staff

present were executive director Chad Lubelsky, Rabbi Benjamin Luks-Morgan and Sasha Luks-Morgan, and Marcy Kastner and Lorne Mill.

No synthetic leisure wear was seen here. Dress ranged from fancy flowing gowns to smart dresses paired with perfect party shoes.

And mingling with the guests was the next fashion generation. The honorees' grandchildren looked adorable. The little girls sported dresses and pretty purses; the boys accessorized their suits with trendy trainers.

Cocktail-party wild-mushroom bites were inspired by gardener Betty Palik's expertise in mushroom growing. Ron Mofford's Wolfe Montcalm Catering also created the delicious dinner, which was paired with Golda and Chai wines from Isabelle and Josh Silver.

Another evening highlight was the entertainment. Hilarious humourist Josh Freed's comments on Montreal idiosyncrasies had the audience in stitches. Daboom cakes from Gavin Grant sweetened the after-party featuring music and dancing with soul/R & B performers Slim Williams and Meredith Marshall.



Past and current Temple honorees: Senator Marc Gold, senior rabbi Lisa Grushcow, Stephen Yaffe, Betty Palik and Michael Prupas, Brian Bronfman, Marcia Bronfman, Jewel Lowenstein and David Moll.

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Westmount trio offers Elite soccer coaching to very young players

BY JENNIFER BALL

Footie Elite was born from the collective vision of three elite Westmount soccer players who pursued coaching in (professional sports) retirement and are now helping Westmount players of the “beautiful game” improve their skills.

Footie Elite was founded in 2023 by Julian Hughes, Eric Koerich and Nicola Guerguinov after they saw a gap in personalized, all-encompassing soccer training. Since then, they’ve trained over 1,000 students.

The *Independent* spoke with Hughes on May 27 to discuss how growing up in Westmount and playing for the city’s teams and the inter-city Westmount Soccer Club was a launch pad to his playing and business career. (The Westmount Soccer Club is independent of the city’s soccer program.)

“I grew up playing in the recreational league and when I was 11 or 12, I [joined the Westmount Soccer Club] with [Koerich], and we won the [the club’s] first ever trophy.”

Soccer experience

The respective playing careers of the three co-founders of Footie Elite have taken them to the following pitches:

- Julian Hughes – Former Bohemian FC U19s, located in Dublin, Ireland and an NCAA player who played in Buffalo, NY,

- Nicola Guerguinov – FC National Sofia U19s, located in Bulgaria, and AS Laval Ligue 1, located in Laval,
- Eric Koerich – McGill Varsity and CSMRO Ligue 1, located in Outremont.

Hughes said that he decided to start the business to make a little extra money before starting college. “I asked myself: ‘What skill set do I have?’

“Because I am pretty good at soccer, I wondered if I could potentially make money from it...”

“I’ve been privately coached my whole life so I [thought I could offer] private coaching and one-on-one training.”

Hughes said that after playing in Ireland, he felt he had the CV to back up his business plan so he listed his services on a Westmount family’s Facebook page and immediately he had seven kids sign up for private lessons.

Approach

Now the trio has grown the business to offer small group-training and private sessions.

“For this summer, we are going to have six different locations with 700 students in our program, and we have 200 to 250 kids just in Westmount alone.”

Hughes said they are starting to develop players as young as two years old in a program called “Baby Elite” and their largest cohort of soccer students is aged between

two and eight.

The total global engagement of Qatar’s 2022 FIFA World Cup was five billion people across TV, streaming and digital platforms. Many locally will watch this year’s version of the sporting event – which runs from June 11 to July 19, with Mexico, Canada and the United States hosting – and the *Independent* wondered if Hughes

believes any of his players are good enough to go on to have competitive careers on a big stage.

“Footie Elite started as elite training so there’s lot of the kids that I coached that were at a super-high level. There’s one girl that I trained who is 14, turning 15 soon, and she’s going to be called up to the national team.”



From left, Nicola Guerguinov, Julian Hughes and Eric Koerich, the three co-founders of the Footie Elite soccer coaching business, in Westmount Park by Melville Ave. on June 1.

‘Dive In’ theme for this year

Library signs up members for summer reading club activities

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

The annual children’s TD Summer Reading Cub at the Westmount Public Library was launched June 12 with a party in this year’s theme of “Dive in.”

For this year’s opening event, the Westmount Room was transformed into an undersea theme with a “Mermaid PJ” party featuring Montreal author Mitali Banerjee Ruths.

Each child who signs up for the reading club receives a bag complete with a log book for keeping track of their summer reading along with stickers, an activity booklet and a reading incentive game, according to children’s librarian Wendy Wayling.

“They may read books, and eBooks or listen to eAudio and CD books from the library or from home, in either English or French,” she said.

“If you have trouble reading print because of a physical, visual or learning disability, ask us about getting an accessible format for the log book,” she added.



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Everyday Reconciliation has answers for non-native people

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Can non-native people wear beaded earrings? Should they give their land back? What about land acknowledgements? Is it okay to attend a powwow?

A new book, co-authored by Derek Montour from Kahnawake and Westmounter Elin Miller, attempts to answer questions like these, while also trying to provide non-native Canadians with concrete ways of contributing as individuals

to the national reconciliation process.

Everyday Reconciliation, published by HarperCollins Canada, came out on June 2, the same day as a launch held at Paragraphe Books downtown where Montour and Miller spoke with the *Independent*.

Montour, who grew up in Kahnawake, is executive-director of Kahnawake Shaktiia'takehnhas Community Services, while also serving on the board of directors for the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission.

Miller, who immigrated to Canada in 2008, lived initially in Ottawa and is a dual Swedish-Canadian citizen. She spent most of her professional life in the Swedish foreign service. More recently, she was at Global Affairs Canada, working on issues of international law, human rights, gender equality, conflict resolution and peace-building.

Among other things, their book explains how the Mohawk nation lost much of its land, while also providing Montour's perspective on the 1990 Oka crisis, as well as the impacts of Canada's and Quebec's language policies on his family and people.

Practical advice

In 13 essays, they speculate on what reconciliation might look like on a practical level. The resulting answers may potentially provide non-native people with insights, potentially contributing to meaningful change.

"Reconciliation is really about building relationships – that's at the centre of it," Montour said in an interview. "Because without understanding each other, and understanding the true history of these lands, it's hard to have real conversations."

Miller agreed. "We think that reconcili-

ation has to happen between individuals to build trust if we're going to be able to share this land peacefully and resolve some of the land-rights issues and things like access to resources.

"It's also very important that people see themselves in the reconciliation process," she continued. "That's what this book is really doing: trying to give non-Indigenous people some advice on how they can contribute through small but meaningful acts."



Everyday Reconciliation co-author Derek Montour (at the mic) is seen here with co-author Elin Miller (seated far left) on June 2 at Paragraphe Books in downtown Montreal.



Elin Miller and Derek Montour.



Retail Review

VERONICA REDGRAVE

While waiting for my chauffeur – aka the #24 bus – at Sherbrooke and Grosvenor, I stopped for a smoothie. The mirrored sandwich board outside Green Glow had caught my eye.

Owner Elisabeth Ercole has launched her dream. A few years ago, she created her organic products at home. During COVID, orders were made on Instagram and she delivered them herself.

Now, her welcoming space has a range of drinks (energy-boosters and jet-lag helpers, for example), Kind Cravings cookies made with sourdough, vegan broths, wonderful tea blends and, yes, even dog treats.

"We are a 100-percent vegan, all-natural salad-and-juice bar," she summarizes.

Tired travellers can order healthy salads or wraps to go, or to enjoy at her outdoor table. Dessert could be her blueberry chia pudding.

As I sipped a soothing tea, I agreed with a sign that seemed to say it all: "Good food with nutrients is the new luxury."

Indeed, Green Glow is truly all natural. "We don't use any additives, artificial

Green Glow goes from delivery to Sherbrooke St. space



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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

May sales: Spring market

mark-up over valuation from 11.4 percent to 19.9 percent – in truth, the market seemed unstoppable.

Then suddenly the May sales figures show only eight sales (so far, according to the dates posted by local realtors), four of which were less than \$2 million and the highest was \$3,900,000, resulting in an average of \$2,197,500.

Once adjustments are made, the market is still going up, but might be looking to get some rest as spring frenzy turns into summer slumber, and moving time for those who bought their houses in the spring.

Days-on-market declines

One of the most significant statistics in the May market: it took an average of 61 days to sell the houses, only one of which surpassed 100 days to sell, compared to an average 97 days in April, with four of the 15 over the 100-day mark. The median days-on-market in April was 24, with four houses of the 15 selling in less than 10 days; in May, the median was 40 days, but

four houses sold in 15 days or less.

In the meantime, agents posted five new condominium sales in May and added an extra three to the April list, bringing the total second-quarter condo market to 11 sales, ranging from \$600,000 to \$2,845,000; the \$600,000 sale was for 24.5 percent less than its 2026 valuation.

One section of a St. Antoine St. triplex sold for \$1,082,000, some 61 percent above tax assessment, the highest in the quarter. Already the 11 second-quarter sales are ahead of eight in the first three months of the year, with one month remaining to increase the volume.

Despite the fast turnaround of so many properties, at last count the number of listings climbed to 158 from 151 a month earlier. The lowest asking price is \$1,098,000 – our monthly survey shows nothing ask-

ing less than \$1 million since July 2025 – while the number asking between \$2 million and \$4 million has jumped by 12 and makes up the bulk of what is being offered in Westmount right now.

Ten houses have been rented so far this year, none for more than \$10,000 per month, while 21 more are seeking tenants, eight of those asking above \$10,000.

Adjacent-Westmount has been busy, too, with 10 one- and two-family dwelling sales just north of the city limits this year, only one for more than \$2 million; 11 in eastern NDG, again only one over \$2 million; seven just east of Westmount above Sherbrooke St., three bringing more than \$3 million. In the Square Mile, only two small townhouses have sold so far this year, one for \$2,375,000 and the other for \$2,275,000.

Boys will be swimmers



A boy was defiantly swimming with, or near, the ducks of the Westmount Park lagoon on June 15 as people on shore tried to call him in. Swimming in the lagoon is against park rules, but there were no enforcers around.

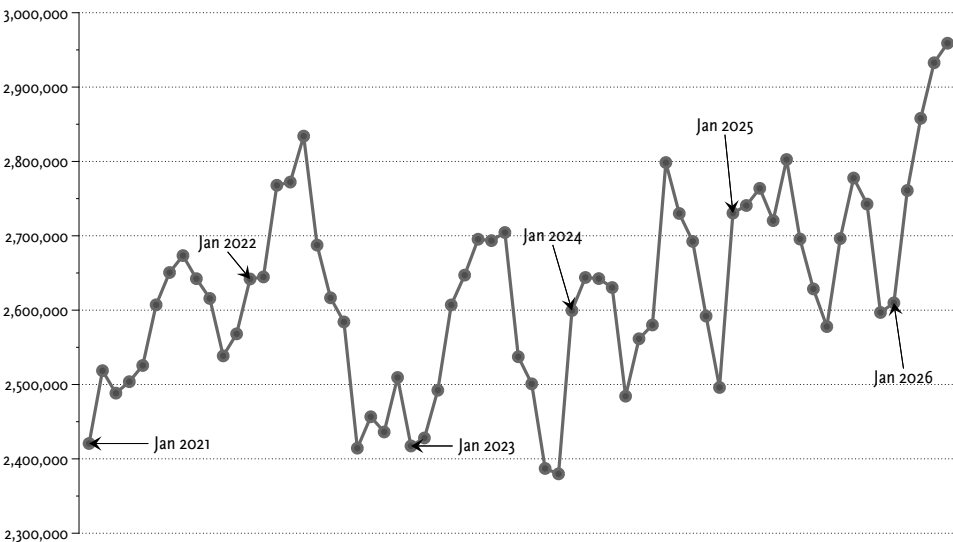
PHOTO: LAUREN SWEENEY.

Note: The following article relates to offers to purchase Westmount residential dwellings that were reported by local real estate agents as having been accepted in May 2026. Because they are not final registered sales, the addresses cannot be made public, but give a good idea of current trends in local real estate activity. The graphs below offers a picture of these trends over time.

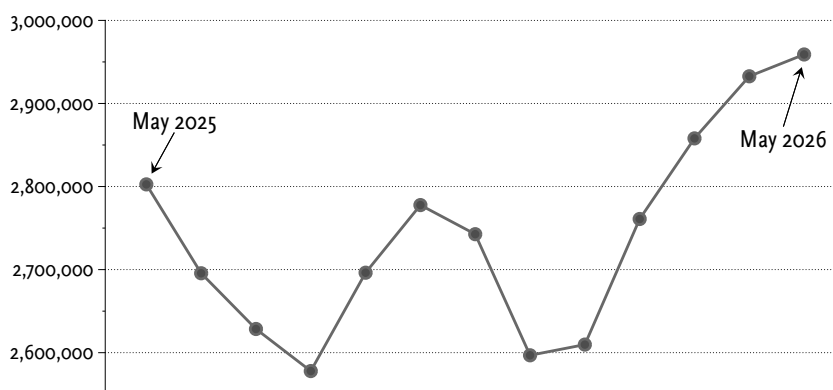
Springtime is usually a very confused transition period in Westmount weather, and the same can be said about the local real estate market.

Due perhaps to the number of intricacies involved in negotiating sales these days, five more transactions were added late to the April sales list, with prices ranging from \$4,300,000 to \$8,180,000, sending the average price for the month from \$2,405,300 to \$3,550,867 and the average

Average adjusted price for 'typical' Westmount house, by month, January 2021 to May 2026, based on accepted offer dates




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Remus has gone missing



*Westmount
A-dog-tions*

LYSANNE FOWLER

You may have seen the “lost dog” posters neatly placed on our major streetlamps and posts. You must have looked again just to commit to memory in case you see him.

Little Remus is a 10-year-old rescue Beldi whose owner has had him with her for two years. He has been very lucky to be so loved since he had been in a Moroccan shelter before adoption.

Shy but sweet, he was with friends of his owner near Lafontaine Park while she was at work and, unfortunately, he was unleashed there.

Not being at his home area, he was gone swiftly from what was not his usual street. Remus was sighted the next day but, since that report, no news has been received. Thank you for looking out for him.

He is very well cared for and there is great hope that he will be home soon with his owner Valentine and his cat companion



Jedi thanks to support from the community.

If you have a sighting of him, please take a photo if you can and let him approach you slowly.

Do not hesitate to contact Valentine at 438.496.7848. Every bit of information helps, and your kindness is very appreciated.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



City Views

VERONICA REDGRAVE

One Sunday afternoon, six-year-old Tessa made her own lemonade. After a “thumb’s up” family taste testing, she decided it would be fun to set up a lemonade stand. Beginning with creating a sign, the idea snowballed into construction and Dad John Anthony built a stand. Then Tessa and her twin sisters, Freya and Ruby, painted it.

Tessa’s goal was to raise money for homeless animals so the family chose to donate to the SPCA.

Family members and friends gathered to sip and support. The fun extended onto the street with sidewalk chalk, bubbles and music. The sunny day was a success, raising \$362 for the SPCA.

Next step? Tessa wants to do more. Never too early to start on such a thoughtful path.

Barbu & Tigrise need a new family



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Barbu and Tigrise were born and brought in to safety by our kind neighbour in the spring of 2019.

These bonded siblings – Barbu the black-and-white longhair on the left, and Tigrise, the grey-and-white longhair on the right – have been with the same family since they were born.

It has now become necessary to place

them in another family, and I am pleased to bring them to your attention for adoption. They are loving and playful, healthy and active. They are sterilized, and up to date on their inoculations, vetting and grooming.

They will come to a new home with all their toys and accessories, as well as their favourite food and supplies.

If you would like to find out more about this adorable brother-and-sister duo Barbu and Tigrise, please do not hesitate to contact Arthur at 514.609.4035 or email him at arthure_d@videotron.ca to present yourself and discuss your interest in adoption.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



Lemonade aids homeless animals



Freya and Ruby book-end Tessa at the lemonade stand.

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Marcelline brings Wild West to Westmount



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

La Villa Sainte-Marcelline's recent Fête Champêtre featured bandanas, Stetsons and boots. The Westmount private school for girls had cowgirl culture as the theme for the school's 2026 annual event.

Accessories ranged from western-style hats and neckerchiefs to a sheriff's star. (But, in fact, they were all stars!)

Support by dozens of mom volunteers – as well as grandmothers – ensured the celebratory afternoon was a smooth ride. Tables of refreshments ranged from cotton candy (much loved) and popcorn (an alluring aroma) as well as *crudités* and hamburgers.

Games attracted line-ups of keen players, who competed so they could then choose prizes from a well-stocked prize table. Offered were games, fun costume jewellery, toys, lip balm and unicorn specials. (I noted that the latter two were sought-after items!).

The events ran like clockwork due to the organizing committee. Led by **Jennifer Cosgrove, Laetitia Latulippe, Annick Gravel, Vanessa** *continued on p. 22*



Laetitia Latulippe, Annick Gravel, Vanessa Larocque, Jennifer Cosgrove, Linda Di Luzio, Annie Chau and Viviane Nguyen.



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Social notes, cont'd from p. 21

Larocque, Linda Di Luzio, Nhung Tran, Annie Chau, Chantal St. Pierre and Viviane Nguyen, the group ensured the day was not only *über-fun* but *über-planned*.

Marcelline staff noted amidst the happy crowds were Julie Anniballe, directrice générale; Josée Berardelli, directrice des études et Orthopédagogue au primaire; and Marie-Christine Pelland, directrice des services aux élèves.

Huge supporters of the joyful *fête* were Dilallo burgers, NCBF Partyz (popcorn, cotton candy and balloon décor), TCBY frozen yogurt, Mello's dessert truck and Kermesse Plus (carnival games).



A popular food truck at the event.



Jennifer Cosgrove and Gabrielle Bélanger.



Charlotte Dolan.



Evelyne Derlachter and Isabelle Setlakwe.

**Indie's
summer schedule**

No issue: June 30
(Dominion Day observance)

Issue: July 7

Usual summer break:
July 14, 21 & 28
and August 4

Back to weekliness:
August 11 until Christmas

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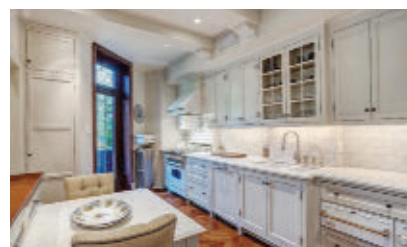
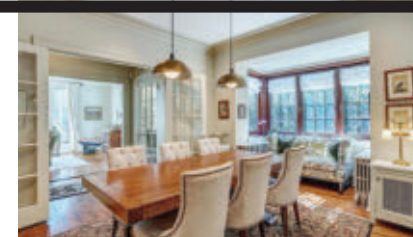
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